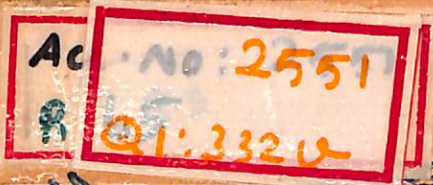


HIS HOLINESS
SRI THIRUCHI SWAMI





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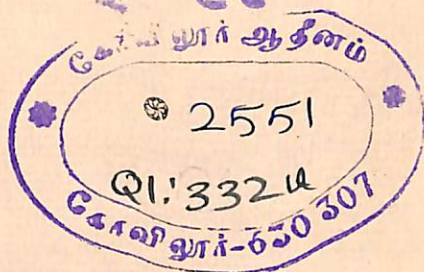
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HIS HOLINESS SRI THIRUCHI SWAMI

(A brief Life Sketch)

RAMANANANDA



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FOREWORD

The greatness of a country consists not merely in the luxuriance of its material wealth, nor in the abundance of its artistic productivity. These do not by themselves make a country wholly pre-eminent. As long as a country does not prosper in its wealth of the spirit, its greatness is not real greatness, but it is only spurious ostentation. The western countries have, by their strenuous efforts, enormously developed their knowledge of science and their achievements in this field are, like the conquest of space, amazing. But they do not seem to have approached even the shadow of happiness, Ananda, the attainment of which is the highest aim of human existence, the true purpose of life. In this respect, we the people of this land of Bharat are very very fortunate.

In this good and sacred land which is adorned as *Punya Bhoomi*, saints and prophets, men who have realized true Wisdom have taken birth; they turned their vision inwards and by their search, found out that there is no true happiness to be got from the evanescent objects of the outer World, and that real Ananda can be got only by the knowledge of the spirit, the realisation of *Atma-jnana*. They saw this truth with crystal clearness, they realised this knowledge and established it without any room for doubt. From time to time sages were born and have made the light of realisation of the *Atman* continue to shine, never allowed it to diminish ever so little, but have tended it and made it shine brighter and brighter through the ages. This is a well-known fact.

Coming in this line of inheritance, assuming the form of the Grace of *Parasakthi Sri Rajarajeswari*, and bestowing this divine grace on all devotees is the noble *satguru* the worshipful *Mahan Sri Tiruchi Swamiji Maharaj*. It is a matter for very very great joy that some notes on the deeds of mercy of this great soul together with a brief sketch of his life are being published in the form of a book in English.

The Revered *Mahan Sri Tiruchi Swami* is one who has been full of the divine charm even before his very birth even in his germinal state. Like the *Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavad-pada*, he also renounced the home at his very youth, went on pilgrimage from *Sethu* to *Himachala*, travelled widely and saw the bounds of our *Punya Bhoomi*. He is one who has done and fulfilled all his duties, a *Kritakritya*. He had no *Karma* to carry out for his own

self. He was born in this World for the well-being of mankind, according to the gracious plan of Mother Chamundeswari he was assigned to establish a most wonderful pedestal, a throne, for Sri Rajarajeswari and dispense act of loving kindness more tender than a mother's. Those who had his 'darsan' once will have the desire to have his darsan again just like the bees seeking the flower. The Sadguru's sweet nature charms and attracts all. A mere gaze at the divine face of the Swamiji who shines like an ocean of love, dispels all the cares in the minds of men and floods them with gladness ; this is the special quality of his sacred presence, 'sannidhya visesha'. The sacred utterance from his voice "Ambal will show her Grace, don't be anxious" is like a 'mantropadesa' and removes the cares that could never be left off till them. They have such heavenly bliss in then. To ennumerate all the unique qualities of this personality who shines as divine grace, would make not a foreword but it would become a book by itself.

People who come forward to review the life histories of greatmen and saints must have purity in their hearts, should have no likes or dislikes should be unbiased and just. This attitude is very essential for such examination and elucidation. In this matter our friend Sri O.V. Ramaiah has been successful in a satisfactory manner. Without imagining things, from what he had seen and heard, he has, many a time, looked at the matter from many angles and points of view. He has consulted and discussed things with people of a just mind, for long, studied and considered carefully all things. If he had, naturally, any doubts, he

approached Sri Swamiji himself direct, and got clarification from the very source. And he has described his own true experience in this book. His impartial and straight forward qualities are very commendable.

Having taken upon himself this very worthy service, Sri Ramaiah has presented the life and activities of the great soul in simple, easy style so that even those with not much acquaintance with English can readily and easily understand and get benefitted by the study of this book. Sri Ramaiah's work is very fruitful and highly commendable.

RAMANATHA SWAMI

Easanya Mutt,

Tiruvannamalai S.

Tamil Nadu.

*Tiruvannamalai,
March 15, 1969*

INTRODUCTION

It is always difficult to understand a great spiritual personality. A great man's nature is so deep and his personality so varied and vast than an ordinary human being, is always at a loss to understand it fully. His Holiness Sri Thiruchy Swamy is one of such personalities in the spiritual field living in India to-day. I have heard many devotees talk about him in different ways. Some appreciate his spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Some appreciate his spiritual powers and others his beneficial deeds in the religious and educational fields which are varied and numerous. But, to my mind, all these are only a glimpse of his personality which is so deep and vast even as the ocean. Nobody seems to have scaled its depth and touched the rich treasure of pearls hidden in it. I have had opportunities to know more about him, and this is only a humble attempt at presenting the image of such a great personality as I perceived it, to the public in my humble way.

This venture was undertaken in a surprising manner. A friend of ours, who had started writing about the Revered Swamiji in verse in Kannada, wanted my advise regarding certain points. This kindled my curiosity and I had an opportunity to make earnest enquiries about the facts of the life of the Swamiji. Having learnt that Sri M. Chinnaswamy, the Secretary of the Rajeswari Vidyashaya, had a Tamil version of the life history of the Swamiji with him, I met him and enquired about its details. He was pleased to give me a copy of the true translation into English of the Tamil record. The Tamil version had been prepared by an earnest journalist from

the South. who, it is learnt, had stayed for eight days at the Ashram and collected the facts about the life of the Swamiji from different sources after careful enquiry. Another gentleman from Tamilnad, who was a tenant in the premises belonging to Sri M. Chinnaswamy, had rendered it into English very faithfully at the request of the latter.

When I went through the English version, I was very much impressed and felt that it may be worthwhile to make an attempt to present the personality of the Swamiji, viewed objectively, so as to be complimentary to the available record. As some of the facts had to be verified, a personal discourse with the Swamiji was found necessary. I, along with my friends Sri M. Chinnaswamy and Sri Sahajananda, saw the Swamiji and had talks with him about certain facts recorded in the translated version. These talks were not only useful, but really inspiring.

It may not be out of place here to say that the Swamiji blessed the attempt inwardly and this helped me to make a bold venture. By the grace of the 'Holy Mother', I was able to complete the first seven chapters in seven days without any break. I was surprised myself at the result judging from my inexperience in the literary field. I should say that this is my maiden attempt in writing in English at length and only the readers should judge how far I have been successful and pardon me for the mistakes, if any. I will be grateful for suggestions and facts about Swamiji's life which can be used in the future editions.

The first part, as I have already said, is an attempt

at presenting the divine personality of the Revered Swamiji from different aspects. The second part is his life history, in a narrative form, as obtained from the source already mentioned. Only the lengthy introduction has been omitted, and the facts about the life history, recorded in a lucid and simple style, have been adopted with as little change as possible. In the appendices, information has been furnished regarding the beneficial deeds done by the Swamiji both in this State and outside.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Revered Swamiji for having so kindly permitted me to have the material available about his life and blessed me to go ahead with this humble venture.

I am also grateful to Revered Ramanatha Swamiji of Easanya Mutt, Thiruvannamalai, for the enlightening reward which was made available in a very short time.

My thanks are due to Sri Krishnananda Swami for his valuable advice and co-operation in arranging for the printing of this book.

My heartfelt thanks are also due to Sri M. Chinna-swamy, who was kind enough to give me the English version of the Tamil record and encouraged me in writing this life sketch of the Swamiji.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to the two friends though I have not known their names, who collected the facts and also rendered the same into English.

I am grateful to Sri K. C. Bhimaiah who went through the script carefully and corrected the same with

very little interference with the spirit of the original composition.

My regards to Sri K. C. Chowdappa Reddy who took great pains in regard to the printing of this volume and gave very valuable suggestions regarding its get-up, etc., and also undertook the exacting task of production.

I express my gratitude to Chi. M.R.G.S. Veerendra, the young artist of Chickballapur, who has given beautiful sketches for the cover page and the blocks introduced in the publication.

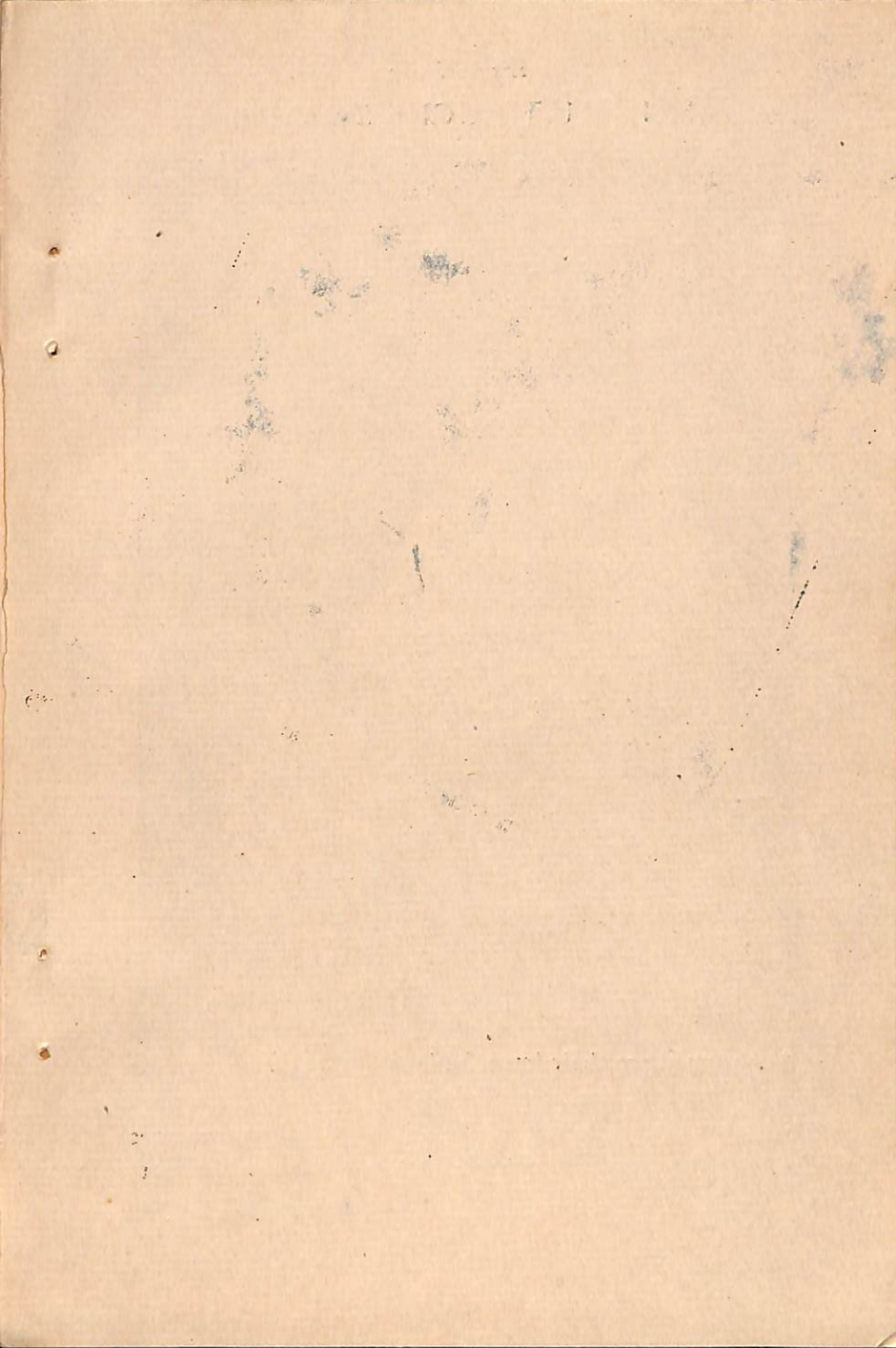
My grateful thanks are due to Sri P.M. Somasundaram, M. Sc. (Hons.) L.T. retired Asst. D.D.P.I., a learned scholar both in Tamil and English who was kind enough to translate the Tamil foreward into English nicely.

I cannot close these introductory words without acknowledging my deep gratitude to my friend, Sri O. G. Rajulu, who has not spared pains to take me and my friends to the Ashrama whenever desired and helped me in many other ways to undertake this venture.

Last, but not least, I am grateful to Sri G. Srinivasan, Proprietor of the Orient Power Press, No. 50, Lalbagh Road, Bangalore, for printing this book in as short a time as possible.

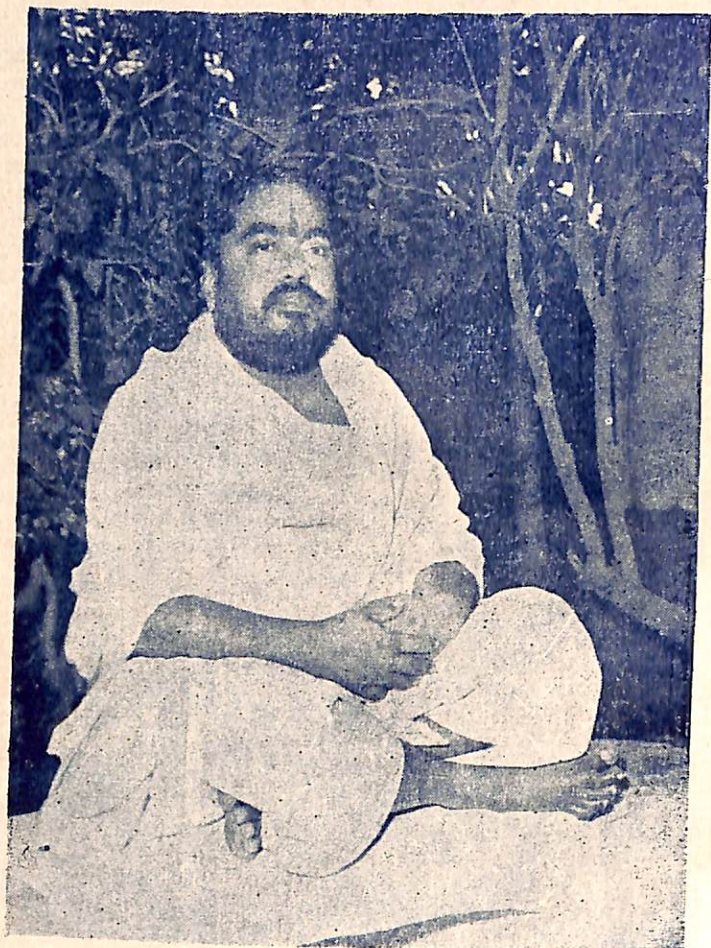
Had it not been for the co-operation of all these friends and well wishers and the blessings of the Swamiji, this book would not have seen the light of the day before the auspicious 40th birthday of the Revered Swamiji.

‘RAMANANANDA



His Holiness

SRI SRI TIRUCHI SWAMIJI



All consumed are their imperfections
Douth dispelled, their senses mastered
Their very action is held to the welfare of Fellow creatures
Such are the seers who enter Brahman and know Nirvana

Geetha—V. 25



HIS HOLINESS SRI THIRUCHI SWAMI

PART I

I. FIRST VISIT....

I had heard from some friends that a Sadhu so noble and kindly, had taken his abode in a tiny village known as Kenchenahally in the periphery of Bangalore. People were talking high of his spiritual powers and wisdom. This kindled my natural curiosity, and I made up my mind to see him once.

Ascertaining the location of the place I, along with some friends, went to see him in a car on a Friday morning. At the sixth mile on the Bangalore-Mysore Road, we noticed a name board pointing the way to Kenchenahally. We turned to the left and took a winding mud road. After covering a distance of about two miles of rough road, we reached a small village. Proceeding a little further to the south, we saw a green garden. Our road ended almost at the gate of the garden. As we approached, we saw a number of shady trees, sweet smelling champaks and a number of cocoanut and arecca palms. The whole area was surcharged with a serene and peaceful atmosphere. The sweet odoured wind was cool and refreshing. There was not much hustle and bustle. One of the recluses who was moving about peacefully showed us a small cottage where he said we could see the Swami.

After washing our feet at the fountain in the compound we were to enter the little cottage. But learning that there were some visitors inside, we sat on a stone bench in the front, under a shady champak tree. All round,

it was a fascinating sight of green trees, blooming bushes and neat flower beds freshly watered. Our weary minds were experiencing a pleasant change and we were deeply engrossed in the serene silence pervading the whole atmosphere.

After some time, we were shown in, by another recluse who was near the Swamiji. We entered the cool little cottage. The small hall which was paved with Kadapa slabs was clean and the atmosphere was pleasant. We saw a white robed, smiling figure seated in a corner welcoming us in a soft voice. His well-set broad round face adorned with the flowing curly hair was serene and appeared to be lost in contemplation. His eyes were kindly and had a transcendental look. His ears were beautiful and extended to the cheeks. He enquired about our welfare and wanted to know where we came from. We introduced ourselves and our whereabouts in a few words. When he asked about the purpose of our visit, we said that we came to see him and seek his blessings. He spoke in a soft soothing voice and said, "Mother will bless you and do you good."

We felt as though the holy Mother herself was speaking through this Saint. The words seemed to spring from the heart of the Swamiji in a measured soft tone. We felt as though his words were charged with a magical power and they bathed us in an ocean of supreme gratification. We had not much to say as it was our first acquaintance. Moreover, in his presence we felt that it would be impudence on our part to talk much. It appeared to us that by his very kindly look, he had understood all about us and knew what we wanted. We sat for a few minutes in silent meditation.

We offered some fruits and flowers to the Swamiji most of which he returned to us with his blessings. We saw a peasant woman from a neighbouring village about whom also he made kindly enquiries and gave her a fruit. The poor woman was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude. She had perhaps to unburden a number of woes, but before she could speak, her heavy heart had lightened itself by the Swamiji's kindly words. There were some well-to-do people from the city and a few rich devotees from the South. To all of them he spoke in the same kindly manner and said

that "the Mother would bless them." In spite of their opulant look, they too seemed to have their own worries and problems which they had desired to express before the Swamiji and seek his advice.

We took leave of him and before we left, we had a stroll inside the garden. It consisted of an area of about ten acres, strewn with cocoanut palms and shady trees. It looked like an abode of peace and pleasantness. The soft wind wafted over the smiling paddy fields and the little birds chirped in the trees. We rested in the place for some time lost in pleasant thoughts about the Swamiji. We had perforce to leave the place with a rather reluctant heart.

On our way back, one of our friends who did not feel the same way as we did, remarked: "After all is it only for the peaceful atmosphere and the soothing words of the Swami in the name of the holy Mother that we come to an Ashram; Is it only to lay bare our worries and seek solace that we come to a holy person? This is after all the way of the mundane world. What is the real spiritual benefit we

get?" He went on with many other similar queries.

I advised him to be patient and not to jump into conclusions so soon "After all, by an hour's contact we will not be learning all about a great person. By the grace of God we may have more occasions; let us wait and see" I said and then we parted.





II. ONCE AGAIN

AFTER nearly an year, I had an occasion to visit the Ashram again along with some friends. As soon as we entered the precincts of the Ashram, we saw a Sadhu in orange robes supervising the construction of a building work. On enquiry he told us that he had been asked by the Swamiji to be incharge of the construction of the Ashram building consisting of a big hall, a kitchen and

a couple of rooms. The work was in steady progress. The Sadhu said that he was only a novice in the field of building work, but the Swamiji's words were his inspiration and guidance. He was managing things in a wonderfully efficient manner from his experience. He spoke softly and guided us to the same cottage where the Swamiji was seated. It was 4-00 p m. when we reached the Asharm. The cool breeze and the green foliage were fascinating.

We prostrated before the Swamiji and he asked us to be seated with the same soft kindly voice which I had noticed an year ago. There was a small gathering of different classes of persons from the city and other parts. There was also a Chettiar from the South with his family members. After some time, the Chettiar left taking Swamiji's blessing. Then the Swamiji enquired about our welfare and other personal matters after which the topic switched over to the Chettiars and their philanthropic works. The Swamiji was happy to speak high of their charitable disposition. He narrated with some amount of zeal as to how the Chettiars were responsible for renovating

most of the important temples in the South by spending crores of rupees. He made particular mention of the services of the forefathers of Sri A. L. R. Somanathan Chettiar, who had just then left, and how they had renovated the famous Rameswaram temple by sacrificing everything they had.

The Swamiji seemed to have a high regard and appreciation for their organised charitable undertakings. He seemed to know very well the cultural background of these Chettiars. We learnt, later on, that he had many devotees among Chettiars and it was they who were mostly helping the Swamiji in many ways to fulfil his pious wishes.

Incidentally, his knowledge of the origin and development of some of the famous South Indian temples seemed to be phenomenal. He seemed to know many historical details which are difficult to get from the books. Prompted by some queries raised by some of us, he went on explaining the importance of the famous temples in the South, the particular forms of worship in vogue, the Agamic practices and patronage enjoyed by each temple, etc. He

also explained some of the more famous Muts of South India and their historical and religious importance. He made a special mention of the Koiloor Mutt of Ramanathapuram District. We were surprised at his vast knowledge about these Institution, most which he had seen and patronised directly or of indirectly.

About two hours had passed by. In the meantime, at about 6-00 p.m., he had to leave for bathing and perhaps for meditation. Evening pooja was performed to the majestic shining Thrisula and the tiny Vinayak Murthy, which were placed in the left corner of the room. Prasadam was given by the Swamiji himself invoking the blessing of Mother diety and then we were permitted to go. He asked one of his disciples to see that refreshments and coffee were served to us before we left. At his bidding we helped ourselves to a sumptuous course of hot idlies and vades, so kindly and willingly served by the inmates of the Ashram.

As though by instinct, we went round the

smiling garden of the Ashram again, in the evening. This time, we saw a lot of improvement in it. Agriculture had been undertaken in a systematic manner. Paddy and vegetables were being grown. We saw a small cattle-shed where there were a number of good cross-bred cows. Farming operations were being looked after by one of the Sanyasis of the Ashram.

When we left the Ashram, it was almost dusk and my friend, who was a bit critical on the last occasion, kept silent, perhaps ruminating over something. By way of prompting, I enquired as to what he felt this time. He said that though he appreciated the Swamiji's wide knowledge about religious matters and his kindly disposition, he still held that this in itself was not enough for spiritual hungry soul and that there was not much that gave any spiritual solace to him in that evening's talk with the Swamiji.

Though some of us were inclined to agree with him, I felt that there was some spiritual glow in the personality of the Swamiji, which would not reveal itself so easily. Perhaps, we

should also deserve it and have a deep desire to perceive it. I said that we should wait and see and should not proceed to judge a person in a hurry.





III. GODDESS-MOTHER....

ONE day, on our way to Mysore, we decided to have the darshan of the Swamiji for a while. It was early in the morning and as we approached the Ashram, the whole surroundings including the horizon were bathed in the golden rays of the rising sun. The sun was peeping from behind a

fringe of hillocks on the Eastern side of the Ashram and the entire scene was lovely and glorious. As we entered the Ashram, the chorus of the morning prayers, combined with the chirping songs of the birds, welcomed us. We joined the group of inmates of the Ashram who had gathered in the big hall before an imposing picture of Sri Raja Rajeswari, the Divine Mother. There were about half a dozen Sadhus in orange robes and others clad in white. Vibhuti and Kumkum adorned their fore-heads. After arathi and prasad, we were invited to join them for break-fast.

The invitation was quite welcome as we had left early only with morning coffee. I was surprised to see the imposing Ashram building which had come up so soon and so nicely. The picture of the Divine Mother placed in the hall was grand and inspiring. The Divine Mother, who was also called Animishamba or Meenakshi (or unwinking eyes), appeared to be gracefully watching all those who came to her.

After breakfast, we went to see the Swamiji at the same old cottage. He was

there seated already and welcomed us as soon as we entered. After salutations, we sat on a mattress in front of him. He had the same graceful and kindly look and spoke in soft simple words. One of us wanted to know from the Swamiji how to attain spiritual perfection and what practices he would advise.

"Pray to the Divine Mother and she will give you everything. We should feel that we are all her children and develop that attitude. This is the only way to earn her grace. We have nothing to worry; she will take care of us more than a mother", said the Swamiji.

One of us queried: "Then, is there no need for us to do Japa, Penance and perform ceremonial worship, etc." He advised us "First of all, learn to cultivate Bhakti and develop a sense of surrender to her feet; she will take care of you in all respects. In this Kaliyuga, Bhakthi is the only way to salvation."

"What is the nature [swaroopa] of the Mother Divine and how do we obtain her grace" was the next query raised by one of us.

The Swamiji was silent for a moment for he was lost in deep meditation. Then he spoke: "Her nature is indescribable. Even the greatest Yogies and Siddhas are unable to understand her. We will not know her unless she reveals herself out of her own grace."

The Swamiji continued: "She is the manifestation of Primordial Divine Energy; the universal principle of life and activity; the fountainhead of all grace and wisdom. She is the Divine Mother, the universal principle of fertility, love and happiness. She wears a green robe studded with yellow, symbolic of the life giving rich green principle in the universe (the photo-synthetic plant chlorophyll). She holds the arrow of flowers in one hand (Puspa bana) symbolic of the universal principle of Ananda (happiness) and sugarcane in the other hand representing the universal principle of sweet wisdom. The same Mother appears as the Goddess of creation and learning (manthrathmika) and as the Goddess of existence, prosperity (yent-rathmika) and as the Goddess of annihilation or absorption (thantrathmika). All this

universe is only a tiny particle of dust of her feet and her nature is infinite and beyond the mind.

“All the living beings are her children and all mothers are her own individual manifestations. Unless we realise this truth and treat all women as our mothers, we will not be able to cross the ocean of Maya. Without her grace we will not be able to know about the real nature of God. Is it not through the mother that a child comes to know of her father? Without devotion to her feet and without her grace, talk of salvation is only a cry in the wilderness.”

After prostration and receiving prasadam we took leave of the Swamiji with our hearts full of devotion to the ‘Mother Devine’ so inspiringly described by the Swamiji.

On our way to Mysore, we were deeply pondering over the Swamiji’s words of wisdom, which kept us silent for a long time. Our critical friend was also not in a mood to say anything except that he would like to see the Swamiji again.



IV. IN THE HOLY HIMALAYAS-KAILAS....

A Sadhu who had just returned from his pilgrimage in the North and on his way to South, came to the Anantha Ashram in Bangalore. Having heard about the Kailas Ashrama, he wanted us to take him to Kenchenahally. When we reached the Ashram, it was mid-day. We joined the mid-day pooja celebrations, after which we were invited for lunch.

The Swamiji was seated along with the Sadhus and other inmates of the Ashram. We sat in a row along with other visitors. After reciting 'Annapurna Stotra' we par-took of the food. We were all served alike and all the preparation were delicious. Absolute silence was maintained throughout and after dinner, every one left the room quietly.

We spent some time with the inmates of the Ashram. All of them had a sense of devoted duty and filial affection for the Swamiji. They expressed a feeling of supreme satisfaction at the steady and silent influence of the Swamiji's personality over their activities. They were surprised as to how unawaringly their character and spiritual advancement were being influenced.

At about 3-00 p.m., we went to see the Swamiji in the cottage under the shady trees. After enquiring about our welfare, he wanted to know about the Sadhu who was with us.

The Sadhu introduced himself. He said he belonged to a village in Andhra and on his return journey from the North he wanted to have the darshan and blessing of the

Swamiji and then proceed on pilgrimage to the holy places in the South. The Swamiji said that the 'Divine Mother' would surely bless him. He wanted to know about the places visited by the Sadhu in the North and all that he had seen there. While the Sadhu was narrating his experiences, the Swamiji went into a reminiscent mood. He enquired the Sadhu as to whether he had seen Nepal. Yes, came the reply.

The Swamiji was silent for some time and then he said, 'You are a blessed man. One must have acquired a lot of merit (punya) to be able to see the holy Himalayas. For, is it not the abode of the Gods and Saints, besides being the roof of the World? I was fortunate to have visited almost all the holy places in the North including the Himalayas, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Manasa Sarovar and Mount Kailas-they are all real abodes of spiritual tranquility. I could feel the living presenee of the Gods and saintly beings in these places'.

'The peace and tranquility, the beauty and grandeur of the vast range of snow clad

mountains, the crystalline springs and lakes, the winding liquid beauty of the rivers can never be surpassed. They are the real Sathyaloka and the Tapo Loka. I can never forget the experiences of my visit to these places and I wish to be there again. The holiest of the holies-the grand Kailas is a living personification-the 'Sthula Linga' form of the great benevolent Lord Shiva ''.

The Swamiji continued : "If we should compare the Himalayas to a million petalled white lotus, then the Kailas is like the stigma of this flower. The waters of the Manasa Sarovara are the real nectar and the waters of the Ganges, Sindhu and Bramhaputra the flowing honey. Being there is like a Yogi taking his 'Kundalini Shakti' to the 'Sahasra Chakra' and bathing the same in the Amritha bindhu. It is like the dwelling of the Jiva in the abode of bliss. My words fail to describe the great Himalayas, the mind recedes and we are lost in the mute blissful transcendental peace.

"To me Nepal is very dear. It is there that I met my Guru-the noble Sivapuri Maharaj and had his blessing according to the

directions of the Divine Mother. How can I forget the place which has been blessed by the presence of my 'Paramahansa' Guru? His thin, tall and graceful figure, his shining eyes, his highly emaciated body due to long years of penance was a sight for the Gods to behold. His benign face and serene look haunt me and beckon me to him.

“What to say about Kashi-the heart of Mother India and the seat of our Hindu culture and learning?”

“What an experience to be there in the presence of Lord Viswanatha, especially on a Sivarathri night! The conflux of the three holy rivers at Prayag, Mathura and Brindavan, where the great Lord had spent his younger days, Kurukshetra where the sacred Geeta was taught to Arjuna by Sri Krishna, the Great Ayodhya, the seat of the noblest prince Sri Rama, all these are sacred and even a visit once will surely transform us”.

Choked with emotion, the Swamiji went on: “The twelve Holy places of Jyothirlingas sanctified by the presence of the perfected souls-Naimisharanya and Badrikshetra, the

abode of Narayana, the Holy Gaya, Puri Jagannatha. How many holy places and thirthas are there? Bharath Desa is really a blessed land ! You are really a blessed man to have visited all these places.

“Let the Mother bless you on your pilgrimage to the South. Do not fail to visit all the sacred Temples and Thirthas. It is the land of Siddhas, the Great Acharyas, the Nayanars and Alwars and it is also the birth place of the Saiva, Vaishnava and Samaya Acharas. The five Saivite temples consecrated to five elements, the Vaishnavite temples of Srirangam, Kanchi and Thirumalai the great abode of Lord Vaikundeswara (Venkateswara) the real Vaikunta on earth the six sacred temples of Lord Subrahmanya the great Meenakshi temple and the Kanyakumari should not be missed. And last, but not the least are Rameswaram and Dhanushkodi. If possible go to Ceylon; there are also a number of sacred places for Hindus”, the Swamiji concluded.

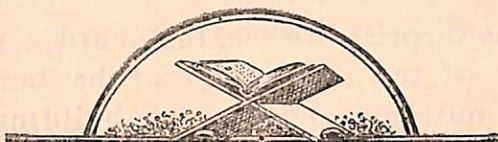
“I am really blessed by your advice, Swamiji” said the Sadhu, and I am very sorry

that I could not see Mount Kailas and Manasa Sarovara. You know the area is now in the hands of Chinese and no Indian is allowed to go there. Only the Holy Mother should protect us. The Himalayas are so dear to the Indians and our culture is so closely associated with the sacred mountains and the holy rivers. I pray to Holy Mother to protect us from the forwarding evil on our northern borders. The pious wishes and ardent prayers of holy persons like you only should save our country and our ancient culture ”.

On our way back, we were all silent for a long time. The Sadhu was highly pleased by the visit to the Ashram. He said that he had seen many swamies but the Tiruchi Swami (*i.e.*, the Swamiji of Kailas Ashram at Kenchenahally) was one of the few really great living Swamies to-day.

My critic friend said slowly, “ Yes; but we have yet to learn more about him.”





V. OUR EDUCATION....

ONE day we were invited for the inaugural function of the school established in the vicinity of the Ashram by the Swamiji. The school was named "Rajeswari Vidyashala". It was a very nicely got-up function where a large number of dignitaries from the city participated. A good number of villagers and children had also gathered. We were all

served with fine refreshments. A high dignitary in the Ministry inaugurated the school and paid compliments to the donors and the Swamiji for having helped the Government in the cause of education of children which was so dear to him.

I was surprised to see, that hardly within one year of the completion of the imposing Ashram building, another fine building (now a school building) consisting of a couple of class rooms, a big hall and office room, etc , had been completed. I learnt from one of the office bearers that a Charitable Education Trust had been formed under the patronage and Presidentship of the Swamiji and that liberal donations were received by his influence and that they could complete the building so soon by his blessing. Everybody felt that it was a boon to the school-going children of this backward area, who otherwise, would have gone without education.

When we reached the Ashram after the school function, it was evening. The Swamiji was seated in the Verandah of the Ashram as he too had just then returned from the

function. Inspite of the busy day, he was quite calm and composed. He welcomed us and asked us to be seated.

As the function was still fresh in our memory, one of us asked for the opinion of the Swamiji about our methods of education and the part that religious institutions could play in this regard.

The Swamiji smiled and said : "First of all let me make it clear that secular education is not the province of religious institutions, and as religious teachers, we should confine ourselves to the teaching of shastras and discipline the boys in moral and religious practices. But now-a-days, education is only a means to livelihood and not to enlightenment. So much so, there has been very little response for the study of sanskrit and scriptures. Our Sanskrit schools and colleges do not have sufficient number of students. You know our Government institutions do not inpart religious education as a matter of policy. So much so, the modern education, lacks in moral and spiritual foudation, so essential for our well being. We are at a loss to know how to solve this problem.

"At least if the Ashrams could establish some schools in the proximity and indirectly educate the children in moral and religious practices, we may be doing a bit in the regeneration of our youth. You should know that youth is the most impressionable age and unless these things are taught in the childhood we will not be able to do much later. It is really a very unfortunate situation that exists to-day. I am trying to do a bit in this direction in my own way," said the Swamiji in a soft voice.

"This is not a small service" said one of the Trustees. "The very spiritual atmosphere prevailing in this place is enough to mould our boys into enlightened citizens. The example of some of the selfless workers and teachers incharge of this institution and, above all, your blessings will certainly do a lot of good to our children and improve their standards."

"We know your feelings. We wanted only a bit of land to put up a small primary school building, but you have given us a big extent of $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres of land with a magnificent

building suitable for both primary and middle Schools. What begins humbly becomes really big by your blessing. Whatever you touch, it becomes sacred. Are we not seeing all this for the past couple of years? May you be blessed Oh, Our God " said another elder of the village.

I was quite impressed by this expression of gratitude on the part of the villagers whose children were being benefitted by the school. One of us said : " If all the religious institutions start 'Gurukulas' for the benefit of our children as you have done, it will be a real service to the society and the country."

" A large number of Mutts and religious institutions are running hostels, schools and colleges. It is almost a fashion of the day, but I am not seeing the desired results. Why is it so ? questioned another.

Because, most of these institutions are after patronage and importance in the name of education, said the Swamiji. " They are interested in putting up big buildings and admitting large number of pupils. How does

it help? Government could run colleges and schools better. Where is any scope for personal contact and supervision in such institutions? Is it not by perception and persuasion that students learn? Why should we copy others? We have our own cultural background. What better idea can you think of than the ancient 'Gurukula system?'

"Our modern education is more mechanical and superficial with an emphasis on material prosperity. Where can any real 'dharma' and spiritual good find a place in this set up? Our society has suffered much for lack of this moral and spiritual background and yet we are moving in the same direction. The Holy Mother alone has to save us," added the Swamiji with a sense of despair.

After this inspiring talk, though we were not in a mood to leave the presence of the Swamiji, we had to as the Swamiji had to attend to his evening duties and we had our own problems at home. When we left the Ashram, it was dark. On our way back, we taunted our 'critic friend' as to what he had to say now. "I am really impressed by the

Swamiji's concern for the welfare of the society. But what can he do? He cannot change the course of the river which has run too far: Who can turn the tide?" He said in a low voice. He seemed now to have understood the Swamiji better.



THE NATURE OF HOLY & MOTHER

The fully real, therefore, has two aspects: one called Shiva, the static aspect of consciousness and the other called Shakthi, the kinetic aspect of the same. For this reason the Kali shakthi, dark as a thunder cloud, is represented standing and moving on the white inert body of Shiva. He is white as illumination (prakasha). He is inert for pure consciousness is without action and at rest. It is she His power, who moves. Dark is she here because, as Kali, she dissolves all in darkness, that is vacuity of existence, which is the light of being itself.

Again she is creatrix. Five corpse like Shivas form the support of her throne, set in the wish granting groves of the Isle of Gems (Manidvipa), the golden sands of which are laved by the still water of the ocean of Nectar (Amrita), which is immortality.

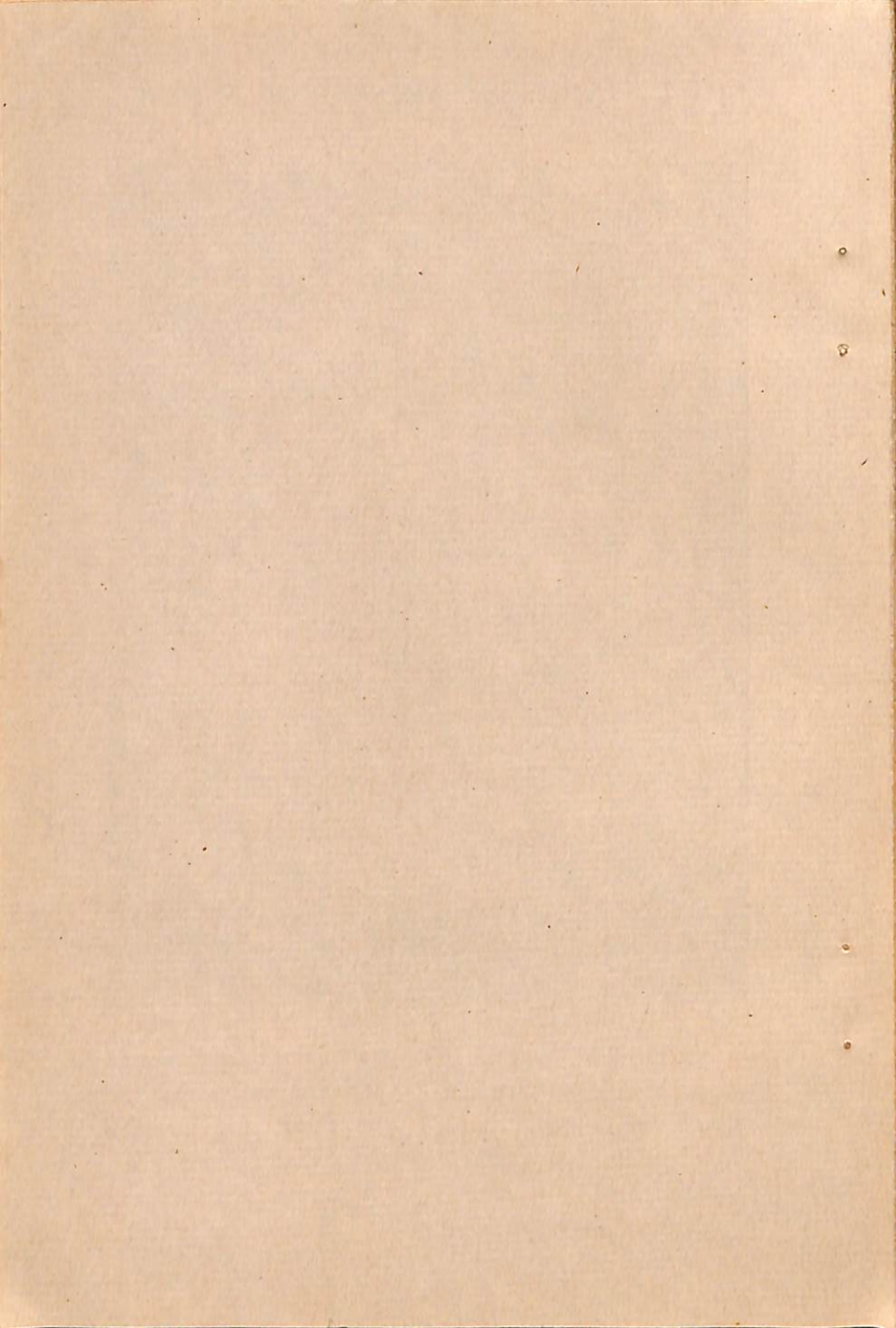
In both cases we have a pictorial presentment in theological form of the scientific doctrine that to every form of activity there is a static back ground.

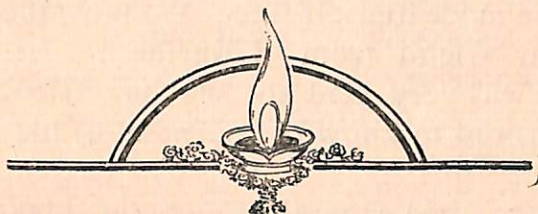
(From *Shakti and Shakta*-Page, 39
by Sir John Woodroffe.)

SRI RAJARAJESWARI—Divine Mother



O! Mother, thou art the embodiment of all knowledge. Wherever there are intelligence and learning, there are thou manifest. All women are thy forms. Thou hast thy being in the universe, filling and permeating all things.





VI. OUR DHARMA ...

AN officer incharge of the Badrinath temple at the Himalayas who had lately become our friend, came to see us one day on his way back from Thirupathi. He wanted to visit some religious institutions in the South and consult the Heads of such institutions about certain matters. Incidentally, we took him to the Kailas Ashram.

When we reached there, it was about 9-00 a.m. The Swamiji was receiving visitors in his cottage. After the usual formalities, we were asked to be seated. The Swamiji was busy talking to the stream of visitors. After some time, he made himself free. We introduced to him our friend from Badhrinath. He said that he was very glad to see our friend and then desired to know the purpose of his visit.

After some general discussions regarding the worship, management, etc., of the Badrinath temple, our friend wanted to know about the great Acharya Sri Shankara who had established one of the four Mutts, the Jyothir Mutt, in the North in the Himalayas.

The Swamiji was silent for some time and then spoke in a deep but soft voice: "To me, all the three Acharyas are great and each of them has done his best to spread the Hindu religion in his own way. They have done much to reform our Hindu Society and religion. However, I consider Shankara as the greatest of Acharyas the World has ever known. His interpretation of our sacred texts is perhaps the best and true to the spirit

of the texts. Our religion is universal and its principles are meant for the humanity in general, and Shankara has referred to this aspect vividly in his commentaries. Adwaita has all the virtues to be recognised as a universal philosophy and gradually the World is recognising this fact. Shankara is really a 'Jagadguru'—A Guru for all times and for all people," averred the Swamiji.

He, however, added: "But all may not hold the same opinion. There are different schools of thought in our society. We are generally lost in contraversies over superficial aspects of our religion and forget the essentials which advocate fundamental unity. It is high time that all the Muthadhipathies of different schools of Hindu religion and the Pandits meet and evolve a common Hindu religion based on universal tenets and basic principles, selected from the ocean of our religious scriptures. They should meet in conference, discuss these matters and come to conclusions as early as possible and then propagate them. Otherwise, the Hindu society will get disintegrated."

The Swamiji paused for a moment and

continued: "The common man is mostly ignorant and disinterested over these things while the educated are tending to become atheists due to the influence of the so-called modern scientific education. Sooner or later we may have to face a hopeless situation. We should become alert at least now. From history it is evident, that such religious conferences have been held previously when the Hindu Dharma was in such a predicament. God himself has taken the human form and protected Dharma.

"The great Acharyas should meet, discuss and evolve certain common principles of philosophy, formulate certain common religious practices (Acharas) and advocate the study of a common scripture like the Bhagavadgita. We will have to preach in a simple and understandable language so that it may reach the bulk of the common people. This appears to me to be the only way for the salvation of Hindu Dharma", said the Swamiji in a firm tone.

"Swamiji, how to reconcile Adwaita Gnana with the ceremonial worship of Holy

Mother as observed in the Ashrama" ? asked our friend.

The Swamiji said that they were not opposed to each other. "You must know that God is both formless and with form. How can this be, you may ask. The same transcendental Brahman manifests himself as the world. When we look at the reality from the stand point of the waking experience the transcendent looks as though it was manifested and appears with name and form. Does not the same clay assume different forms as Ganesha, Ambika, Shiva or Vishnu, when put into different moulds ? Looked at from the stand point of clay, is there any difference ? Looked at as gold, what is there any difference ? Looked at as gold, is there difference between the ornaments ?" the Swamiji asked. But without waiting for reply, he continued :

"Looked at through the medium of the mind, the formless reality appears to have assumed different forms and names. Our conception of different deities is also based on this principle and some other universal factors.

Puranas have given name and form to such concepts to help the beginner. The grand poetical conception of some of these universal factors and the idealization of abstract principles by our Rishies is unsurpassing.

For example, the Thri-Murthies represent the universal principle of creation, sustenance and destruction. They are assisted by different powers. The universal energy (Shakthi) is represented by the Divine Mother (Parashakthi); Ganesha and Subramanya represent the universal creative intelligence and energy. That is why one is said to be Ganapathi the leader, and the other the Commander (Deva Senapathi). The sun is the Prathyaksha Devatha—the sustainer of all living beings by his warmth-giving rays. He represents the Narayana aspect on this earth. The different forms, the ‘ayudhas’ they hold, their ‘vahanas’ represent some aspect of nature. Symbolism and worship of form is necessary in the beginning. I do not want to dilate on this subject as it will be endless. Suffice it to say that all dieties are the appearance of the same transcendental ‘Sachidananda Swarupa’ and, therefore, there cannot be any contradiction.”

"Why do you advocate, particularly the worship of Mother Deity—as seen here?" asked our friend. The Swamiji replied: "I have no objection for the worship of other forms; but to me, the motherly aspect of the reality appeals most even as a Mother is dear to a son. Is it not the experience of many of us? I hope I have cleared your doubts to some extent."

"Why, only to some extent: I am fully convinced and really inspired by your talk. You have cleared many complicated points in our religion and I am greatly enlightened," said our friend from Badrinath, immensely pleased at the wide knowledge of the Swamiji on the complicated subjects of Hindu religion and philosophy.

When we were about to leave the Swamiji asked us to stay for dinner. After dinner, we left the Ashram duly impressed about the depth of knowledge of the Swamiji of Indian philosophy and his interest in religious reform. Our friend from Badri was also very much impressed. Our sceptical friend, however, had this to say? Is it all practical?—Any way, let me reserve my feelings."



VII. WHY THIS PLACE?....

HAVING been closely associated with the Ashram, we were invited for the annual Srirama Navami function. The Swamiji's birthday is also observed on this occasion. By the time we reached the Ashram, it was 10-00 a.m., and there was already a big gathering of devotees. They were in the midst of pooja to Mother Deity and the big hall was full. The Swamiji was seated in the left side

corner of the hall and after the pooja an endless stream of devotees offered 'pranamas' to the Swamiji and received his blessings.

The big gathering included also a group of Chettiar devotees from different parts of South India. They offered their token of gratitude to the Swamiji.

Though it was sultry inside due to the heavy rush of visitors, the Swamiji sat smilingly, unruffled by what was going on around. Bhajans and Khirthanas were going on simultaneously at different places. The Bhajan by a Sindhi group of devotees was very impressive. We also offered our salutations to the Swamiji and obtained his blessing. After Mahamangalarathi, food was served to the entire gathering, which consisted of a few thousands.

We were seated in the big dining hall of the kitchen wing recently constructed. All were served food alike which consisted of a number of items. Poor feeding was also arranged at the school premises and thousands were being fed in a very orderly manner. The food served there was also similar. It was a

grand sight to see such a large number of devotees participating in the Celebrations. It was learnt that, year by year, the number was increasing although no formal invitations were extended by the Ashram.

We spent some time among the people from different parts of the country and observed the various programmes. Devotees belonging to the Sindhi and Gujarathi communities, people from the Tamilnad and North Karnataka had all gathered there. It was learnt that members of the Nepal royal family were also devotees of the Ashram. The growing popularity of the Swamiji, a stranger to this part of the country till recently, was really surprising.

We tried to assess the opinion of the different persons gathered there, about the Swamiji. Some said that he was extremely kind to all alike even as a Loving Mother toward her children and this universal love had drawn many devotees. Others said that he was a great 'Siddha' enjoying the blessing of Mother Goddess and whatever he said came true. His blessings were really beneficial.

Some others felt that he was a 'JNANI' of high spiritual wisdom and knowledge of religious matters and that his guidance was very useful for our spiritual welfare.

I was curious to know why of all the places he chose to settle in a place like Kenchanahally and why he preferred the Kannada area and that too a place near Bangalore particularly.

Different people gave different versions and each one of them had his own ideas. I wanted to know what the Swamiji himself would say in the matter and waited for an opportunity to ask him about it. Luckily for us, the Swamiji agreed to visit a holy place of past glory, situated in a village called Kurudumale near Mulbagal in Kolar District. We took him in our car and as by God-sent, we had a fine opportunity to discuss some of the things which were upper most in our mind after our recent visit to the function. We tried to elicit answers from the Swamiji very carefully.

"Swamiji why did you choose such a small place like Kenchanahally to establish such a big Ashram?" one of us asked him.

The Swamiji smiled and said ; "Whoever had any idea of establishing a big Ashram here. On my way back from Kailasa in the Himalayas, a devotee from the South invited me to visit his house in Bangalore. Incidentally, one of them expressed a pious wish as to why I should not stay in Bangalore. At first, I was not very enthusiastic but said casually that I would prefer to stay in a quite place near about Bangalore for some time. This kindled the enthusiasm of these earnest devotees and soon they were in search of a place. After learning that a farm house with a garden was available at a distance from the city, they took me there. The quite and serene atmosphere of the place attracted me and I agreed to stay there".

One of us queried. "Swamiji, some people say some fantastic stories about this place. What do you say about it ?"

The Swamiji replied : " It is said that the people heard a loud sound of 'Om-kara', when a big Baniyan tree was felled in the garden and that a saint lived here in his subtle form. It may be true ; I have also heard of such an incident, but it is not the reason why I chose

this place. As I have already said, it is the peaceful atmosphere of this place and perhaps the divine guidance that brought me here".

"Why did you choose the vicinity of Bangalore instead of so many other big cities in the South? Is it because of its beauty, salubrious climate, its good people or is it due to its historic importance?" we asked him again.

"For all these, and perhaps, for much more important reasons. I know that this city was founded by one Kempe Gowda, a descendant of the Chieftains living near about Kanchipura in the South" was the Swamiji's reply.

"Yes Swamiji," said one of us. "History says that the forefathers of Kempe Gowda migrated to this area, along the banks of Palar river, to escape from the evil clutches of a haughty chieftain, who had on eye on his daughter. One of the descendants of this line established himself at Yelahanka and his grandson is Kempe Gowda, the founder of Bangalore."

"But what is of high significance to me is the great sacrifice made by the two ladies of the family" the Swamiji said.

"Yes Swamiji. The first lady of the family is Kempamma, who preferred to die in the waters of Palar, than fall a prey to the evil designs of the chasing chieftain. While the foundation for the Bangalore Fort was being laid, the noble daughter-in-law of Kempe Gowda, Lakshmamma, sacrificed her life so that the fort wall might stand. Temples and reservoirs have been built to commemorate their memories. By their sacrifice, they have been deified and formed part the divine shakti, whom you hold in great reverence," said one of us and continued :

"The founder himself was a highly cultured and devoted type of a person and he had foreseen the glory of Bangalore as the seat of rich cosmopolitan Hindu culture in the heart of Dandakaranya, as revealed to him in his dream by the great Goddess Rajarajeswari.

"Yes, it is the same mother Goddess Sri Raja Rajeswari who has directed me to this city, known as Kalyanapuri," the Swamij averred.

"Why did you prefer this Kannda land?" was our next question to the Swamiji.

Pat came Swamiji's reply: "As I have already said, I had no intention of starting anything big in this land. Things have taken shape of their own accord by the divine inspiration of the Great Mother. I am only an instrument in her hands. Perhaps the people of this land are innocent and good and it is the wish of God Almighty that I should be instrumental in doing some service to them.

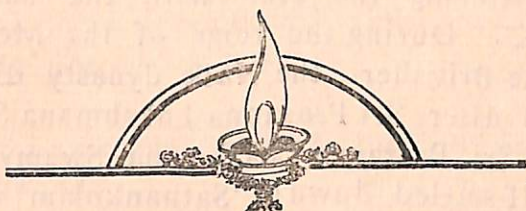
"I am an Avadhoot Swamy. All places are the same to me. I never expected that this Ashram would develop so soon and to such an extent. I do not know what is in store for us in the future. I was instrumental for similar things in other places and left them as easily as I had taken them up. Being Sadhus, how can we develop attachments?" he asked.

We told him: "People are expecting many more things from you Swamiji, and you are their hope and fulfilment. We learn that you have taken up some other benevolent programmes in this land itself. We learn you have taken up the construction of an Ashram

at Talakaveri, the source of the sacred river Cauvery in Coorg District. You have established an Ashram at the foot of Chamundi hills in Mysore. Many institutions in the vicinity of Bangalore and outside have been enjoying your patronage."

"I have done a little in my own humble way and if God wishes that way let it be so. After all, the good people of this land richly deserve it. It is perhaps the wish of the Holy Mother that the rich religious culture of the South should Migrate to this land," said the Swamiji in his usual unassuming manner.

By this time, we had reached our destination. Our 'constant companion' was moved by this talk of the Swamiji and expressed his gratitude for this opportunity.



PART II

CHAPTER I

Family history and birth :

IT is understood that this Swami is the descendant of the family of Sri Krishna Devaraya, the Vijayanagara King, who was ruling the entire southern part of Bharath in the 14th century A. D. In those days, one of the descendants of this royal family, who was appointed as the Governor of the empire

in the south, settled at Madura and was administering the area with the surname 'NAIK'. During the reign of the Moghuls and the Britishers, the Naik dynasty disintegrated after Sri Prasanna Lakshmana Swami Naik. Sri Prasanna Lakshmana Swamy Naik himself settled down at 'Sathankulam' village in Thirunelveli district. He had vast landed properties. He was married to Sri Kothaivalli Thayar, the grand daughter of Ravanappa Naik of Ravanasmudram. Three years later, a son and a daughter were born to them. The son was named Adinarayanaswamy, but the daughter expired the same year. Three years later, Prasanna Lakshmanaswami also died. Stricken with grief, Sri Kothaivalli Thayar moved with her son Adinarayana to her father's house at Ravanasmudram.

Wedding of Selvi Sriranganayaki and Selvan Adinarayana :

When Adinarayana completed 18 years age, he was married to Sri Ranganayaki, daughter of Sri Krishnaswamy Naik, the former hereditary trustee of Sri Nelayappar temple. They had a daughter soon, but that

daughter also died within a short period, leaving them grief stricken. Then, they went to Kanyakumari worshipped the Ambal and intensely prayed for a son.

Divine voice heard at Kanyakumari temple:

While returning after their worship of the Ambal at Kanyakumari temple, a lady came to them and said : " Why are you worried ? You have the full blessings of Ambal ; proceed to Palani to-day itself and worship Palani Velan. As a result of the blessings of Ambal and Palani Andavan, a noble and great son will be born to you. Give up all your worries. The birth of your son will cause good things to happen to the world." So saying, she suddenly disappeared. The couple were dumb-founded at this miraculous incident. The lady who uttered the divine voice was no more to be seen ! They did not know whether or not to trust the words of that woman.

Sri Palani Andavan's Prasadam :

After deep consideration, they felt that they could believe the words of that lady. At

her behest, they proceeded to Palani to worship Palani Andavan. They stayed there for 45 days and worshipped Palani Andavan with piety and devotion. On the night of the 45th day Sri Ranganayaki Ammal had a strange dream signifying the birth of a son by the blessings of the Lord Muruga.

In due course, Sri Ranganayaki Ammal showed signs of becoming a mother. The couple received the blessings of the great Sadhus and Mahans. They predicted that a male child would be born to them and that he would become a great 'Jeevan Muktha'.

During this period, Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi of Sri Shringeri Peetam visited Palani. At his Padapooja celebrations, the Jagadguru gave prasadam of sugarcandy to Sri Ranganayaki Ammal and also blessed her that she would get a 'Satputra'. After some time, the couple left Madurai and moved to Vikramasingapuram near Agastya Koota Parvatham by the side of Papanasam on the banks of the river Thamraparni, as it was found to be a healthier place for them.

Birth of the great Saint (Brahma Nishta):

From the day Sri Ranganayaki Ammal came to Vikramasingapuram, the village became prosperous. The people of the village who were quite happy at this turn of event offered special prayers to God. They celebrated their festivals with more ardour and rejoicing. Special programmes like Musical festivals, recitation of the vedas, Thevaram and Thiruvachakam were conducted on a grand scale.

In the midst of this joy and jubilation, the great and noble Thiruchi Swamigal made his appearance in this World on Wednesday, the 20th March 1929, corresponding to 7th Panguni of the Tamil year Vibhava (Salivahana Sakabtam 1851, Kaliyaptam 5029), in Makara lagna and Poosa Nakshatra. Soon the news of the birth of a female child to Ranganayaki Ammal spread to all corners of the town. As it was an auspicious day, special Abhishekas and Archans were performed in all the temples and to all the village deities as though to augur the birth of a great soul. The poor were fed on a large scale. All the people of the town

congratulated the parents of the new-born child. The child was growing well. Every week, some great man or the other used to come and visit the child and bless him.

Naming of the child :

There were some discussions among the family members of this Vaishnavite family as to what name was to be given to the child. The relatives and friends desired that the child should be given a Vaishnavite name in keeping the family tradition.

However, the parents desired that the child should be named "Palaniswamy" as he was born with the blessings of Palani Andavan. But the relatives argued that in their family nobody was given a Shaivite name so far.

Arrival of Amavasai Swamigal :

Two years passed by and the child was now being called "Swami". In the third year it had a severe attack of fever and all were worried. At that time a Saint called Amavasai Swamigal suddenly appeared in the house and came near the child, which was almost unconscious. The Swami woke up the child shouting thrice "Oh, Palaniswamy". To the the astonishment of all, the child got up

immediately, smiled and bowed to the Swami. The Swami applied vibhuthi on the forehead of the child and the fever subsided suddenly. The surprise of those present knew no bounds and they decided to call the child 'Palani-swamy' from that moment.

CHAPTER II

Boyhood Days

The boy was sent to school when he was five years old. His school-mates realised that there was something strange about the boy and spent their time happily in his company. Palani Swami attended the school regularly. He would only listen to what was taught in the class. He would never touch the book or slate at home. When the teacher asked questions the next day, he would reproduce whatever was taught the previous day, without any effort. The teachers and the Head Master were surprised at his wonderful memory and patted him. One of the Christian teachers had developed so much of affection for the boy that he was about to convert him into christianity, but he was prevented from doing so by the parents. Whenever any

inspecting officer visited the school and enquired about the boy, the teacher would reply that he was first in the class and was very much blessed by the Goddess of learning.

When he was seven, Palaniswami began to loose interest in his studies. Whenever he heard that some Sadhu or Sanyasin had come to some temple of the village, he would quietly leave the class room without telling any one, to see the Sadhus and move with them closely. He would listen to them intently and be happy in their company. The Sadhus would embrace the boy and bless him. One Muslim Yogini was so fond of the child that she used to bathe him and take care of him as her own child. She used to recite stories from the epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, which made a great impression on the tender mind of the boy. She was affectionately called as 'Abubaker Nani' by Palaniswami.

Till his 11th year, Palaniswamy who had the good company of the Sadhus, would visit the village temple regularly both in the morning and evening. Sometime, he would

run to his house, carry sweet-meats and food, and distribute them to the Sadhus with joy. His main pre-occupation was to meet the Sadhus who visited the village and to look after their comforts. When he was engaged himself in conversation with them, he would feel as though he had discovered a treasure. His parents did not scold him for his constant association with the Sadhus, but they had a desire that he should study well and take up a job for earning something for the family.

Arrival of a Bhairava Sanyasi

But Palaniswami was not born to study at school or to take up a job for earning a living. He was destined to become a greatman and to preach good things to the people in accordance with the commands of sri Raja Rajeswari. His interest in class room studies was lost and his association with the Sadhus increased. His attachment to the home was like the water over a lotus leaf. Though he was slowly getting detached from home, his love and regard to his parents never diminished. At that time, one Bhairava Sanyasi popularly called 'Naikutti Swami' visited his village. He was a sadhu of high spiritual

attainment. Palaniswami was very much pleased with his visit. He was just 15 years old at that time. 'Naikuti Swami' was very much fascinated by the personality of the boy and embraced him and made enquiries about him. He took him by his side and gave him 'Mantra Upadesa'.

Due to his association with the Sadhus and the Darshan of great mahans, Palaniswami not only become well versed in all religious matters but also became an ideal 'Brahmacharin' (bachelor) endowed with a sense of piety and good habits.

Just as Arjuna was highly devoted to Drona, so was Palaniswamy to "Natkutti Swami". He learnt Yakshini vidya from the Swami and entertained the people with the same till his 17th year. People loved Palaniswamy with warmth and affection. He became an expert in Manthra Sasira and Yoga sastra. Still he had no peace of mind. Though he had already learnt the Vedanta sastras from learned people, still he approached many great people in search of mental peace. During this time, he met one Muslim by name

‘Kotuva Mastaa Sahib’, who was a very learned man with broad views about other religions. He explained to Palaniswamy the various tenets of Islam and showed him the way to achieve mental peace. For two years, he was deeply engrossed in Islamik religion and people used to say that he looked like a Muslim. But, in fact, Palaniswamy had a strong affinity and attachment towards Hinduism. He set for himself a definite path and was determined to follow that path straight without the slightest deviation.

CHAPTER III

Visit To Ceylon:

Palaniswami had many Muslim friends. When he was 19, some of his muslim friends went to Colombo on some business. Palaniswamy was fond of travelling and, therefore, he also accompanied them to Ceylon. On his way from Kandy to Mahabali Ganga, he had to halt at the Bungalow of a Muslim friend. The people of that place were very hospitable to him.

During that time, one surprising and unusual event took place which is one of the great land-marks in the life history of Palaniswamy. There was a big elephant in the Buddha temple, where the sacred tooth of Lord Buddha was kept. The elephant was used to be taken to the Mahabali Ganga daily for bathing. One day, when the elephant was in

water for some time, it suddenly became mad. It was uncontrollable and was running amuck along the streets. The Mahoot tried to control the elephant, but was thrown out and trampled to death. After attacking many persons and causing much havoc, it began running along the main road in a fit of rage. The whole town was in the grip of terrible fear and panic.

Arrival of military police :

The military police armed with guns, rushed to the place to bring the elephant under control. Having failed to do so, they decided to shoot down the elephant. Many sadhus from the buddhist monastery and many high officials were witnessing the scene. People were running helter-skelter. The elephant was becoming more and more uncontrollable. The police aimed their guns at the elephant and were about to shoot it dead.

At that moment an young man came out from a nearby bungalow and stood in the middle of the road. He wanted to know why so many people were crowding in the streets and shouting about. He did not know that the elephant had turned mad. The people

were shouting at him to get into the house as the elephant was rushing towards him. The military police also warned him. The Buddhist Sadhus and the officials were sorry at the plight of the innocent who stood exposed to imminent danger to his life. The elephant was no within ten yards of the young man and was in a ferocious mood. The young man could not understand anything and he started gazing at the elephant rather innocently. Who was this young man? It was no one other than our Palaniswami.

As soon as the elephant approached Palaniswami, it prostrated before him, put its trunk over his head and roared three times. Palaniswamy moved forward and caressed the elephant. It stood still by his side in its normal mood! The people including the Sadhus and the police, were very much surprised at this phenomenon and ran to Palaniswami and embraced him. They all felt that he was a divine person and worshipped him with gratitude. He asked them to give the elephant bananas and green grass to eat. The elephant after eating them, quitey returned to the temple.

The Buddhist sadhus, Muslim Moulvis and Christian Fathers all invited Palaniswamy to their places and honoured him. The Buddhist Bikshus taught him their religious scriptures and blessed him. The elders also honoured him and showered him with their blessings. The news of this remarkable occurrence spread in Colombo like wild fire and was published in many newspapers. For many days, people used to visit Palaniswamy with cocoanuts and fruits and some even began worshipping him. But he requested them not to bow to him as he was still only a boy.

The news about a Tamil Sadhu being respected and welcomed by great many people of different religions, spread throughout Ceylon. The "Natukottai Chettiars", who were noted for their philanthropic outlook and religious fervour welcomed and honoured the Swamy. Palaniswamy, who had heard much about the famous 'Siva Nandi Patham hills near Kandy in Ceylon, expressed his desire to visit the same. Soon a bus was arranged and the Swami with his followers, reached the foot of the hills one day by 8-00 p.m. and halted there for the night.

At 12 O' clock in the night, a Sanyasini with a Jatamudi (knotted hair) and with a 'Kamandal' in her hand, approached Palaniswamy and said : "Get up Palaniswamy. We will go to the top of the hill and worship the Siva Nandi. Let us go and return before your followers wake up. Get up, don't delay ; you will enjoy the scene of the sun rise from the top of the hill. This will also facilitate you to get the blessing of your Guru and many other good things in life". Palaniswamy hesitated for sometime to go with her alone, leaving his followers behind. At this, the Sanyasini said, "Only we two should go; No body else should come with us". Palaniswamy then left a letter to his followers and went to the top of the hill with the Sanyasini.

On the way, another miraculous thing happened. During his childhood, Palaniswamy used to make the image of Parasakthi out of clay and used to play with it with the other children. When they were half way, the Sanyasini took out a doll from her Kaman-dal and showed it to Palaniswamy. On seeing it, Palaniswamy was very much surprised

and exclaimed: "What a wonderful thing? Is this not the doll of Parashakthi with which I used to play with children in my younger days! How did it come to your hand?" The pious lady replied: "The image with which you had been playing in your childhood and myself are the same". On hearing this, Palaniswamy was very much surprised and was deeply moved. Instantly, he made obeisance to her. The Sanyasini blessed him and said "O my son! you have my absolute blessing. You will preach the message of God to the people and bring perfection to their life. Bring all the good people together and guide them to follow the right path to reach me. Your sphere of service will be the Kannada Nadu. Visit all the holy places including the Kailas. Your Guru is waiting for you in the North". So Saying, she turned into a bright light and disappeared. Palaniswamy felt very sad to miss her so soon, He offered prayers to Sri Rajarajeswari with heart and soul and returned to the camp.

From that moment onwards, he became detached from the wordly things. A kind of spiritual enlightenment and peace dawned on

him. He realised that this human body is only a temporary abode of the soul which should ultimately merge in the indestructable. He felt as though he had mastered all the scriptures. He also developed a strange feeling that Parashakthi was pervading all his being and his mind was becoming steadily fixed on the thought of the blissful mother. He determined to travel over the length and breadth of Bharatha Desha.

CHAPTER IV

Return to the native land and good deeds undertaken in Tamilnad:

After sometime, he returned to India and met his parents and relatives. Then he went to his maternal uncle Sri Doraiswamy Naik's house at Tiruchi Cantonment and stayed there for some time. His parents thought of arranging his marriage and fixing up a business for him. But he never liked any of these propositions. He told his parents softly but stubbornly that he would not marry as his ideal in life was different from theirs. Naturally, they were not happy about this strange attitude of their only son. Palani-

swamy had completed 20 years of age by this time.

The Nattukottai Chettiars who had heard and seen the divine acts of Palaniswamy in Ceylon besected him to visit their home town of Chettinad. By the blessing of Ambika whatever he thought, spoke or did fulfilled itself, thus enhancing the love and respect of the people for him as also his prestige. Though he had the Anugraha of Ambika, yet it was required that, in this world he should have a Guru. So his mind was constantly in search of that "Jnana Guru." He was determined to proceed on a pilgrimage and see Sri Kailas in the Holy Himalayas.

Due to the persistent requests from the Chettiars, Palaniswamy once visited Chettinad. He went to the Koilur Mutt there and worshipped at the Samadhi of Adigurumurthi Muthuramalinga Desikar and meditated there for sometime. He liked the mutt as it belonged to the Advaitic Sampradaya. Later, when he was staying at Pattamangalam, Muthuramalinga Desika Swamigal appeared in his dream one night and told him thus: "The same goddess by whose blessings I have attained

salvation is within you also. Hence to imbibe greater knowledge of the Adwaitic philosophy, visit all the sacred places in India and return after Kailas yatra. You will meet your Guru at Nepal". From that moment, Palaniswamy's mind was driven with an impulse to meet his Jnana Guru. He was always discussing religious and philosophic matters with all those who came to him.

He preached to all his devotees to be always indulged in the meditation of God. His words were like Dhanvanthri-medicine for those who were ailing with mental worries. When he was at Chettinad, he made arrangements for the renovation of temples in many villages and revived the festivals which had been languished. In many temples, Kumbabhisekams were arranged by his efforts. They are described in the appendix for the information of the interested readers.

Due to these useful acts done by him, Palaniswami was respected by the people of Chettinad in general and by the Nagarathar community in particular. As he came from Tiruchi, they affectionately called him

‘Tiruchi Swamigal.’ Thereafter, he was known only by that name. As he dedicated himself to Sri Rajarajeswari right from his childhood and was worshipping her daily, he was also sometimes called “Shri Rajarajeswari Swamy”. The Swamiji renounced all his attachments to his birth place, took up Sanyasa and strictly observed the dharma of sanyasa ashrama. He was called “Sathguru” by the Sadhus.

The Sri-la-Sri Ramanatha Swamigal of Tiruvannamalai Easanya Mutt is well known to the people in the South. This Swami was eager to see Palaniswamy and he met him in the house of one of their disciples at Thambu Chetti Street. It was a meeting of two divinely inspired personalities. Ramanatha Swami made kind enquiries of Palaniswamy and said: “Just as the Loka Matha, you are also like my mother”. The Tiruchi Swami said in reply: “Let us maintain the same affection as that of the mother and child”. From the day of that meeting, the Tiruchi Swami developed a special liking for the Tiruvannamalai Easanaya Mutt. Since then, both the Swamies have become inseparables like the flower and its fragrance.

For sometime, the car (Ratha) of Sri Unnamalai Ambal was under repair. Many people tried to repair it but could not do so. The proper opportunity had not come. One week after Sri Ramanatha Swami left, Palani-swami was feeling worried and restless about the Ratha. One night Sri Unnamalai Ambal appeared in his dream and beckoned him : "Why are you worried? Get up, arrange for the repairs of my Ratha and celebrate my car festival". The Tiruchi Swami woke up from his sleep, but found nobody there. He immediately proceeded to Tiruvannamalai and worshipped the Ambal. He discussed with the local people about the renovation of the temple car. Sri Ramanatha Swami also took an active part in this matter. The public willingly contributed their mite and within one year the temple car was repaired and the car festival was celebrated with much gaiety. The people praised the Tiruchi Swami for the pains he took in this regard and revered him very much.

After the renovation of the temple car, the Swami had to stay at Thiruvannamalai for some time due to the fervent request of the

people of the place. He conducted discourses daily on subjects like karma, bhakthi, jnana and preached many other good things. To the ladies, he preached especially about their household duties and to the students, about good character and behaviour.

The urge within him to undertake the Kailas yatra was becoming intense day-by-day. He, therefore, decided to fulfil this long standing desire within a year. At the invitation of some of the chettiars, he again visited chettinad and from there went on a pilgrimage to all the sacred places in India.

CHAPTER V

Visit to North India,
Himalayas and Kailas :

The Swamiji left Karaikudi along with his disciples, for the Kailas yatra on the 14th day of Thai in the year Hevilambi, in his 29th year. Many of his followers assembled at the station and gave him a hearty send off and prayed for his speedy and safe return after a successful yatra.

The next day, he reached Madras where he was accorded a warm welcome. He stayed there for a week and after collecting all the materials required for the journey, he left for Ongole on the 20th day of Thai. Sri Maragathamayi, a sanyasini of Ongole, performed the Swamiji's 'Padapuja'. He stayed for a day and left for Vijayawada on the 22nd.

**Visit to Vijayawada-Dharshan
of Mangalagiri Narasimhamurthi :**

At Vijayawada, the Swamiji bathed in the Krishna river and visited the temple of Sri Kanaka Durga and worshipped Sri Mallikeshwara Swami and the Ambal. The next day, he went to Mangalagiri, about 20 miles from Vijayawada and worshipped Sri Narasimhaswamy on the hill and performed 'Panaka Puja'. Sri Narasimhaswami is a very popular deity and is held in high esteem in this area.

**Godavari snana and Kotilinga
Kshetra Darshan :**

The Swamiji then returned to Vijayawada and left Rajamahendri on the 27th Thai. He took bath in the sacred river Godavari and

worshipped at the Kotilinga Kshetra. He stayed there for one day and reached Puri Jagannath in Orissa State on the 29th Thai. He stayed there for three days, performed 'Samudra Snana' and visited important places. The Samudra snana here is an everlasting experience to any devotees.

Darshan of Sri Sakshi Gopal Murthi :

On the first of Masi, he reached Sri Sakshi Gopal Kshetra by bus and worshipped Sri Sakshi Gopal Murthi there. After visiting Bhuvaneswar, he left for Calcutta via Cuttack.

Visit to Calcutta :

Calcutta is a historic place, besides being the centre of Bengali culture. The Swami worshipped Sri Kali at Kalighat and the Ambika at Dakshineswar. After visiting Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, he proceeded to Thatakeswaram and worshipped Sri Thatakeswara, the presiding deity. Then he returned to Calcutta and on the Shivarathri day he reached Kashi with his disciples.

Sri Kashi Kshetra Vijaya :

The Swamiji stayed for three months at

Kashi, the most renowned of the pilgrimage centres in India and the place which gives salvation to people. He also visited the neighbouring holy places from there and met many Sadhus, Pandits and Advaita Gnanis. After bathing in the 64 Ghats at Kashi, he visited and worshipped, with great reverence and devotion, Sri Kashi Vishwanath, Annapoorna, Visalakshi, Thundi Vinayaka, Kala Bhairava, Vandeyn Kasi, Veni Madhavar. Kedareswara, Audiganga, Vyasa Kasi, Ramnagar, Lalithambika, Nithya Yathra and Panchakosa Yatra. During the Panchakosa yatra, he had the darshan of Sri Garuthameswara. Many Thapasvins were pleased with his deep spiritual knowledge and expressed their appreciation of his achievements. He visited Bheemakantheswar, Rameswaram, Pandukeswaram, Tharakeswaram, etc., and returned to Kashi to have the darshan of Markandeswara and perform Gomuki snana.

Ashta Bhujangidharshan at Vindychal :

The Swamiji and his followers then left Kashi for Vindychal. They worshipped the presiding deity Jagan Matha Ashta Bhujangi Devi at Vindychal, bathed in the holy Ganges and then proceeded to Allahabad.

Visit to Allahabad and Naimucharanya Darshan :

At Allahabad, they bathed at the Triveni Sangam and visited the Bharadwaja Ashram, Vallabachari Peetam and many other places. Thereafter they visited Naimisharanyam and had Sri Vysa Peeta Darshan, Chakra Theertha snana and Gomuki snana. After visiting Sri Lalitha Parameswari temple and the Parnashallas of ancient Rishis. they reached Ayodhya on Sri Rama Navami Day.

At Ayodhya, they bathed in the Sarayu river and visited the place of birth of Sri Ramachandra, Nandigram and many other holy Mutts.

Visit to Gaya :

Then the Swamiji went to Gaya where he bathed in the Palguni river and worshipped 'Vishnu Pada'. He also performed Sahasranama Archana for Vishnu Pada. Then he worshipped the Akshya Vata and Mangala Gowri. He also visited Buddha Gaya, worshipped Buddha Bhagawan, the Bodhi Vriksha and Budha Viharas. He returned to Gaya and then went to Vaidyanathan and offered worship to Murthi, Dakshinkali and Parvathi after which he returned to Patna.

Visit to Haridwar

The Swamiji left Patna for Haridwar and reached Haridwar via Kashi. He stayed at Haridwar for 15 days and after Brahma Kunda Snana at the Ganges and after visiting the Sapta Rishi Ashrama, Daksh Kund and Mayadevi, he reached Rishikesh and stayed there for a few days. He also visited Lakshman hula and Rishikesh. From Rishikesh, he went to Rudra Prayag and Kedarnath, and reached Badrinath via Piplakot. At Badrinath, he worshipped Shriman Narayan. He returned to Rudra Prayag and from there proceeded to Kurukshetra where the Mahabharath war took place. He bathed in the Surya Thirtha there, before proceeding to Delhi.

Visit to Delhi :

After reaching Delhi, he bathed in the river Jamuna and saw the historic places like Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Rajghat, Jumma Masjid and many other places. He then visited Agra and saw the Tajmahal; from there, he went to Mathura, Lord Krishna's birth place, and worshipped in Sri Krishna Kshetra and Gokul, the places where Sri Krishna is believed to

have played in his younger days. After visiting Sri Balakrishna Kshetra in Gokul and the Srirangaji temple, he returned to Delhi.

Vision of Gnana Guru

When he was at Delhi, the Swamiji felt a keen desire to visit Kashi again. He felt that there were some more places wherein he did not worship. Added to this, the images of Sri Vishalakshi and Sri Visweswara appeared to him in a dream. Immediately, he went to Kashi and started worshipping Sri Kashi Visalakshi daily and was deeply engrossed in the discourses of some of the Adwaitha Jnanies. One night, the Swamiji felt restless. From that moment, the vision of a Jnana Guru was appearing in his mind frequently. He woke up and started meditation, whereupon he heard a divine voice with the blessings of Ambika.

He then went to Patna and from there proceeded to Nepal by Air. At Nepal, he met his Jnana Guru, Sri Sivapuri Maharaj. The aged Sivapuri Maharaj was pleased and received his disciple with joy and affection and gave him Upadesa. The Swamiji's life's ambition was fulfilled that day. He spent

a few days in the presence of his Guru and felt as though he was in heaven. He was so happy in the blissful presence of the great Sivapuri Maharaj that he had no mind to leave him. Sivapuri Maharaj was also extremely happy that he was able to meet his great disciple for whom he was waiting for long, irrespective of his ripe old age of about 140. Sivapuri Maharaj was a saint of great learning. He knew almost all the languages and could speak freely in any language. He blessed the Thiruchi Swamy, his discipie, and called him 'Sivarathana Puri'. All this was done as ordained by the Holy Mother Goddess Guhambika to Sivapuri Swami.

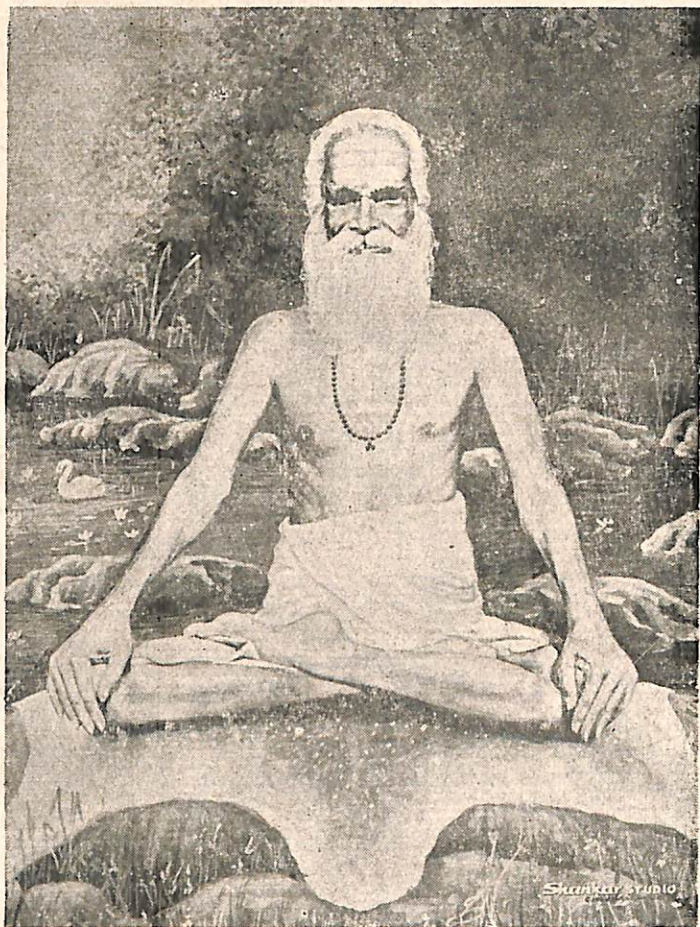
Sri Guhambika's Anugraha :

In Nepal, he bathed in the holy river Vagmathi and worshipped Sri Guhambika. He then went to Katmandu, the capital of Nepal and bathed in the Vishnu Ganga and Rudra Ganga, worshipped Kalabairava and Buddha and after seeing all important places, returned to Patna by Air.

Sri Kailas Yatra :

Next, he decided to undertake the Kailas

THE GREAT SHIVAPURI MAHARAJ



Words cannot reveal him. Mind is unable to reach him. The eyes do not see him. How can he be comprehended save when taught by those seers who indeed have known him.

Arise! Awake! Approach the feet of the Master and know THAT

—Katha

U 17

yatra. He went to Delhi and met certain important officials there. From Delhi, he went to Berli and from there to Kattukuthan. The Kailas yatra was actually started from here. There are 12 different routes to reach Kailas and Manasa Sarovara. After consulting many people in this regard, the Swamiji left to Almora, first by train and then by bus.

Collection of materials for Kailas Yatra at Almora :

From Almora, one has to travel 238 miles to the foot of Kailas Parvatha, through the Lipulek pass. This is said to be the safest route to reach Kailas. The Swamiji collected all the materials required for himself and his followers for the journey. He stayed at Almora for three days. He left Almora by bus to Pavakeswaram, where he stayed for the night. The next morning, he reached Chowkadi, also by bus. From there, one has to go only by walk. After staying at a place called 'Thal' that night, he and his followers continued their journey on foot through Oskote, Palvakote, Tarjula, Kela, etc., with necessary escorts. It should be noted in this connection that only those who have a

strong will and determination, can complete the Kalias yatra.

Arrival at Sri Narayana Ashram

From Kela, the Swami reached Sri Narayana Ashram via Malpuva; from there, he reached 'Thaklakote' through Buthikape Kalapani Liplake, where he stayed for three days. His next stay was at Raksha Sthal or Ravana Hridaya where he enjoyed the evening scenery and also of the Manasa Sarovar lake. From there, he reached the Kailas Parvatha.

When he set his foot on the Kailas Parvatha, he felt that he would suffer no further Janma and that his life's mission was fulfilled. He stayed there for a few hours deeply meditating and acquired ever lasting of mind (shanti). He meditated upon his Guru, Om Shanthi ! Om Shanti !! Om Shanthi !!!

All cannot complete the Kailas Yatra. They should have done good things in their previous janma to achieve that goal. Very few people have returned safely after completing the Kailas Yatra successfully. Those who cannot by themselves undertake Kailas Yatra

can be benefitted at least by seeing those who have returned from that Yatra. It is for the good of one and all that the Tiruchi Swami has completed successfully the Kailas Yatra.

APPENDIX-1

*Facts about several institutions established by the
Revered Tiruchi Swamiji in Mysore State.*

1. Kailas Ashrama :

The entire area of the Ashram comprises of about 12 acres of garden land, with a cottage and two irrigation wells and a cattle shed. The Kailas Ashram is an R.C.C. building with a big hall, ten rooms and a kitchen and dining unit, now used as stores, as a bigger kitchen block has been added recently known as 'Annapurna' Block. The two buildings comprise of a built-up area of approximately 80 squares. A small but beautiful Vinayaka Swamy temple is under construction. There are about 25 permanent inmates in the Ashram in addition to a number of casual visitors from outside. There will be regular poojas three times a day and prayers and bhajans in the morning and evening.

The Swamiji mostly lives in the old cottage situated in the garden.

2. Sri Rajeswari Vidyashala, Kenchanahally:

The Vidyashala was established in 1963 in an area of about four acres donated by the Swamiji. It is situated near the ashram at about a distance of 2 furlongs. It consists of a modern R.C.C. building with a total built up area of 35 squares.

The school provides education from the I standard to X standard. Another similar building for the High school is nearing completion.

The institution is registered as an irrevocable trust and is managed by a Board of 12 Trustees with the Swamiji himself as its President. Sri M. Chinnaswamy, retired Assistant Commissioner of the M. A. S., is the Secretary. The Swamiji is ably assisted by Sri V. Shankarappa, another retired Assistant Commissioner, Sri Vivekananda, a recluse of the Ashram and an educated youngman from Coorg who has dedicated himself to selfless service, are supervising the institution.

At present, the student strength of the school, including the high school section is about 300. The teachers of the school have been handpicked with due consideration for their strength of character and devotion to duty.

In addition to the approved curricular studies, the students in the school are taught asanas. Their cultural and moral welfare is also being taken care of and they are provided with mid-day meal.

The performance of the students of the school has been very good in the recent public examination. It is their good performance and their earnestness (particularly of the girls) coupled with their inability to study in far off places that prompted the benign Swamiji to provide facilities for high school studies in the institution. There is good scope for converting this institution into a Model residential school and plans are being worked out in this regard.

Shantashrama, Mysore :

This Ashram is situated at the foot of the Chamundi Hill near the Lakshmipuram Extension at Mysore. There is a good road leading to the Ashram. The old building has been renovated by the Swamiji and all modern facilities have been provided.

This Ashram owns some wet-lands in the Srirangapatna taluk and a house in Mysore city, the income from which is utilised for the maintenance of the Ashram in addition to contributions from the devotees.

Brahma Sri Shankarananda Swami, who was till recently the Sarvadhikari of the Kailas Ashram, has been appointed as the President of this Shantashram by the Swamiji.

Ashrama at Talakaveri, Coorg :

Noticing the utter lack of facilities to the pilgrims at such a holy place as Talakaveri, the Swamiji strongly felt the necessity for establishing an Ashram at this place for providing shelter to the pilgrims. For this purpose five acres of forest land has been got sanctioned by the

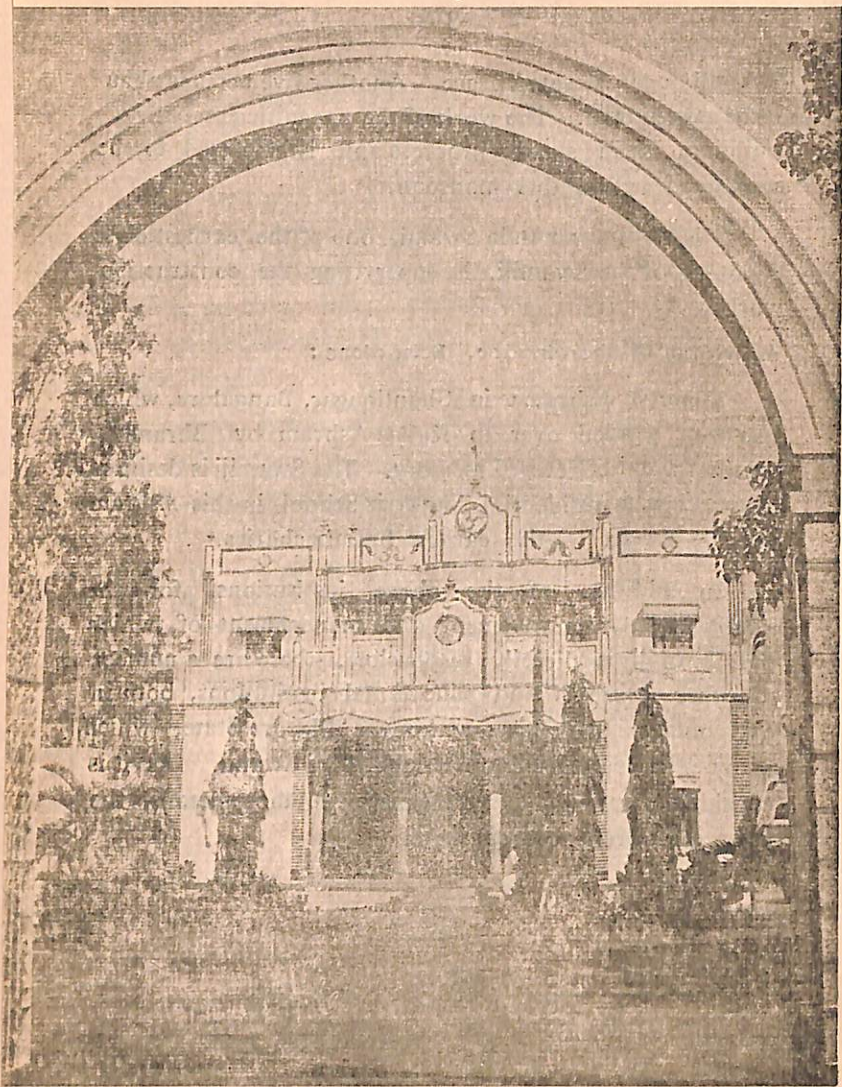
Swamiji on an elevated place. Another five acres is about to be sanctioned. The work of the magnificent Ashra building, is in steady progress and is expected to be completed before this monsoon.

Sri Chinmayananda Swami, one of the earliest close devotees of the Swamiji, is supervising the construction work.

Ashrama at Shantinagar, Bangalore :

There is Ashrama in Shantinagar, Bangalore, which has been handed over to Kailas Ashram by Bhramha anda Swami of revered memory. The Swamiji is desirous of starting a residential Sanskrit School in this Ashram for the benefit of the earnest bramhacharies.

In addition of the above institutions, for the establishment, improvement and management of which the Swamiji is directly responsible, there are a number of other Ashrams and educational institutions, both in and outside Bangalore, within the Mysore State, which enjoy the patronage of Sri Thiruchi Swami. As it is considered superfluous to mention all those details, the have not been recorded here.



APPENDIX-II

Good deeds in Tamilnad :

Alagu Sundari Ambal of the Pattamangalam village is a very powerful deity. This temple was in dilapidated state. Having heard about this place, the Tiruchi Swami once came to this temple and worshipped the Ambal. When he saw the Moolavighraha in a broken condition, he felt sad and immediately decided to renovate the temple and replace the idol. With the help of the public, he got the moola-vighraha replaced and arranged for its Kumbhabhishekha. The Gopura of the temple was also renovated at great expense.

The Nagarathars and the village people took part in this renovation work with great love and reverence. Thus, Pattamangalam was the first place in Tamilnad in which the Swamiji started his good deeds. As he came from Tiruchi and completed this good task, the people of Pattamangalam affectionately called him 'Tiruchi Swamigal'. From that day onwards Palaniswami was being called as Thiruchi Swami. The news of this good work done at Pattamangalam spread throughout the State and people from many villages invited the Swami to visit their villages.

Kallal :

This is a place in Chettinad situated on the Karai-kudi-Rameshwaram railway line and is full of vysyas. The Mulaikottu festival of Sri Narkaniambal, the village deity of this place, was not celebrated for a number of years due to factions in the village. At the request of the villagers, the Swamiji visited this place convened a meet-

ing of the villagers, gave them good advice, settled their feuds and celebrated the 'Mulaikottu festival' with pomp and pageantry at great expense. The village people were very glad and were grateful to the Swamiji for his great service.

Nattarasankottai :

Nattarasankottai is an important centre of the Nagarathar community which is also situated on the Karaikudi-Rameswaram railway line. There are a number of temples here and the Samadhi of the great Tamil poet Kamba Nattalwar. One of the temple is that of Sri Netrambika (Durga), of wife of Lord Krishna. For many years, the Kaliyatta festival of the Ambika had not been celebrated. At the request of the villagers, the Swamiji visited the place and with the help of the local people conducted the Kaliyatta festival for 22 days in a grand manner at an expenditure of several lakhs of rupees.

Vetriqur

This village is also situated in Chettinad near the palace field, the village deity being Sri Annapoorniambal. Here too, the Madhu Eduppu Festival of the deity had not been celebrated for many years due to factions in the village. The people of the village who heard about the good deeds done by the Swamiji in many other village temples, invited him to their village. The Swamiji visited the place, settled the disputes between the villagers and advised them to work with heart and soul for the resumption of the festival and management of the temple. Large sum of money here collected soon and the Madhu Eduppu festival of the Ambika was celebrated on a grand

scale. This noble deed of the Swamiji made the people of the village very happy.

Virayachilai

This is a place near Pudukkottai, which consists mostly of vaishyas and of a number of Shiva temples. The village deity is 'Adaikalam katru Ambal. Here also the temple was in a dilapidated condition. At the request of the leaders of the village, the Swamiji visited the place, met the people and proposed to perform Kumbabisheka and build the Gopura of the temples. Thousands of rupees were collected and the Kumbabisheka was celebrated according to the sastras.

Kulipirai

This village is near Pudukottai, mostly populated by Chettiars. There are many temples in this place of which the village deity Sri Kokanyaki Ambal is very powerful. But the temple was in a damaged condition and the people were very sad about it. At the invitation of the people of the village, the Thiruchi Swamy visited this place, met all the people renovated the temple, installed a new beautiful vigraha and celebrated the Kumbabhisheka at great expense to the joy of the residents of the village.

Devakottai

This is a big town in Chettinad consisting mostly of Vaishyas. There are also a number of families of Shaivites here, which have rendered many good services in the construction, renovation and management of temples. There are many Shiva temples at this place. A temple was constructed for Mahakali in the prakara of a Shiva temple and the Swamiji was invited to attend

the Kumbabhisheka celebrations, for which lakhs of rupees were spent. The Swamiji responded to the invitation, visited the place and took part in the celebration. Rankim.

This village is also full of the Nagarathars and here also the temple of the village deity Sri Ponnazhagi Ammal was in a dilapidated state, due to some disputes between the people of the village. At the invitation of the village leaders Tiruchi Swami visited the temple and worshipped the Ammal. The Ambika temple was renovated at an expense of thousands of rupees and the Kumbabhisheka was performed. Wherever Tiruchi Swami went, a sign of prosperity could be seen in those places. As a result, invitations were pouring in to him from various places for renovation of old temples, etc. It would, however, be redundant to describe here each one of such good deeds done by the Swamiji in the several parts of Tamilnad.

School facilities for the poor:

In addition to the services rendered to the various religious institutions, the Swamiji took keen interest in providing educational facilities to the poor. At the invitation of the villages of Chokkanathapuram in Chettinad, the Swamiji visited the place and it was represented to him that there was no primary school in the village for the poor children. The Swamiji discussed this matter with the villagers and, at his instance, a school was started at this place, which is running well even to-day.

The Tiruchi Swamiji has been responsible indirectly, with the close co-operation of the authorities of the Ishanya Mutt and particularly of Ramanatha Swamy, to establish a Higher Secondary School in the premises of the Mutt at Thiruvannamalai and run it on a model scale. He is the President of the school and the orphanage.

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